



This presentation introduces online tools that can be used to support public deliberation.

Goals of the session

- At the end of this session, participants will know:
 - Types of online tools available to support deliberation
 - What to consider when choosing an online tool for deliberation
 - Features of the Deme platform, as used in the Community Forum Deliberative Methods Demonstration



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During this presentation, we discuss the types of online tools that can be used to support public deliberation and what to consider when selecting an online tool. We also present the Deme platform, a web-based tool developed by the Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University. We used Deme in the Community Forum Deliberative Methods Demonstration project for posting resources, discussions, and voting.

Features of public deliberation

- Brings diverse public perspectives together
- Provides education to enable informed discussion
- Provides the opportunity for facilitated discussion to weigh others' views, make tough choices, and consider the tradeoffs of these choices



Public deliberation is a method of obtaining informed public input, usually to guide program or policy decisions. Topics appropriate for deliberation are generally complex, involving multiple tradeoffs. In deliberative sessions, participants engage in open discussion, learn about others' perspectives, exchange views, and explain the reasons for their own opinions.

Public deliberation brings diverse public perspectives together; provides information such as educational materials and expert testimony to encourage informed discussion; and provides the opportunity for facilitated discussion.

This presentation focuses on the use of online tools to support public deliberation. These tools can be used in deliberative methods that are fully online, or in methods that are in person but have an online component.

Online tools can:

- Support a large participant pool that represents diverse perspectives in different geographic locations
- Allow participants to join the conversation when it's most convenient
- Provide multimedia learning
- Offer multiple modes of expression
- Facilitate collaboration among participants



Online tools can enhance face-to-face interaction or be used alone. Online tools can help:

Enable participation by a large, geographically diverse participant pool;

Help accommodate participant schedules, allowing participants to join conversations when it is most convenient for them;

Provide information through multimedia, including videos, text, audio recordings, and pictorials;

Give participants a number of ways to express their opinions through chats, polling, and discussion boards; and

Promote collaboration and policy input through document sharing, collaborative editing, and decisionmaking tools.

Traditional online deliberative tools

- Traditional online deliberative tools include:
 - Document sharing
 - Comment submission systems
 - Publicly visible commenting
 - Discussion/message boards



Traditional online deliberative tools include:

Document sharing, which provides participants with relevant documents for learning and review;

Comment submission systems, which offer participants a way to submit comments, usually to program officials or policymakers;

Publicly visible commenting, such as the comment sections at the bottom of blogs and news articles, which give people a way to share reactions to a target article; and

Message boards, which provide a forum for discussions where participants can respond to others' posts and comments.

Special purpose tools

- Special purpose tools
 - Polling
 - Brainstorming
 - Argument mapping
 - Budgeting tools
 - Collaborative editing
 - Petitions



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The online tools used in deliberation are sometimes built for special purposes, such as polling, argument mapping, budget development, and collaborative editing. These tools, which are often paired with online forums, are helpful for supporting the process of deliberation - open discussion, learning about others' perspectives, exchanging views, and helping participants explain the reasons for their own opinions.

A polling tool allows participants to vote or express preferences among different options. Polls can provide insight into where participants stand on specific issues and can be useful for generating discussion among participants once they see how their fellow participants are responding to these issues.

Similarly, brainstorming tools foster idea generation by allowing for participants to submit ideas to the group and are often paired with polling tools to help a group see the preferences of fellow participants.

Argument mapping tools apply techniques for visualizing the components of an argument. They can illuminate the various sides of an argument, rationale, supporting evidence and how they are related to each other. Argument mapping often consists of diagrams with boxes and arrows and can resemble a flow chart of how an argument fits together. For example, specific conclusions might be placed at the top of an argument map with arrows connecting to specific evidence in support or objection to this conclusion. This type of "thought mapping" can help participants understand their own thinking more clearly and can help them communicate the reasoning behind their arguments to other participants.

Argument mapping tools can be added to an online forum, allowing participants to create and post their argument maps to generate discussion.

Budgeting tools can serve as another visual aid for supporting discussions. Participants can create virtual graphs or pie charts to see how different pieces of a budget fit together. For example, participants can be given a set of competing priorities for spending and asked to allocate certain amounts of money to each item. A virtual pie chart, which can be altered based on how the participant chooses to allocate spending, can help the participant see the tradeoffs in his or her choices.

Collaborative editing tools allow participants to work together on the same document by inserting comments, in-text edits, and/or highlighting text or sections that are visible to the group.

Petition tools allow participants to develop and sign on to proposals for action. Participants can provide reasoning for developing their petitions and can pair their petitions with collaborative editing tools to allow for input from multiple users.

Examples of how these tools have been used

- San Francisco Transportation Department
- Active online community/discussion board—Peer to Patent
- Use of comment submission in administrative law e-rulemaking
- Open Government Initiative: The use of IdeaScale and the petition tool (We The People) at Whitehouse.gov



Now we can talk about a few examples from the previous slides and specific examples of how they have been used to gather public input and support deliberation.

The San Francisco Transportation Department needed a way to get public input on how to spend transportation funds. The department used an interactive budgeting tool as part of the discussion. The budgeting tool allowed participants to divide up a “virtual pie” for priorities regarding where to spend transportation funds. This helped participants visualize how a set amount of funds would be distributed and helped inform their discussion.


An example of an active online community and discussion board is the Peer to Patent project, an initiative by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (or USPTO), which opens the patent examination process to public participation. This initiative uses an online system where members are “peer reviewers.” The project aims to improve the quality of patents issued by allowing the public to supply the USPTO with information relevant to assessing the claims of pending patent applications.

Comment submission tools have been used by many government offices for administrative law e-rulemaking. These offices use comment submission boxes for participants to provide written input or ideas on specific topics. The comments are compiled through the submission tool for easy review by the government office. This process has been used by the executive branch for more than a decade.

Finally, a recent example of polling and petition tools can be found in the Open Government Initiative, begun in 2009. The Open Government Initiative used the online tool IdeaScale to promote public participation in government by encouraging participants to submit specific ideas on new initiatives, vote on these ideas, and then see which ones were rising to the top based on the public’s votes. Similarly, the petition tool (We The People) at Whitehouse.gov promotes public participation in Government by offering an online system where participants can create, view, and/or sign e-petitions on specific issues of interest to them. As promised on the Web site, if a petition gets enough support, White House staff will review it, ensure that it is sent to the appropriate policy experts, and issue an official response.

What should you consider when choosing an online deliberative tool?

■ Media required: Text, Voice, or Video



Antibiotics and Harm to the Community

Tuesday, March 14, 2013, 8:10am by George

I am very concerned about this and I feel that educating everyone (especially parents) on this matter and possibly the AMA setting some guidelines on how much antibiotics is considered too much. Can this be done?!


Tuesday, March 14, 2013, 11:24am by Lorraine


My main concern, however, is that with very strict rules and regulations, some men, women and children may be denied the medications they need due to various regulations and/or technicalities. If we could find a way to limit this from taking place then that would be helpful for all.

Wednesday, March 14, 2013, 3:15pm by Marty

I think this needs to be a topic of discussion among the medical community on how to reach doctors as well as patients..

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When selecting on tool for online deliberation, it is helpful to think about different features of the tools.

First, different types of online tools require different types of media. Generally speaking, online tools can be text-based, voice-based, or video-based.

One example of a text-based tool is a discussion board, where participants provide input in written form. For voice-based communication, people can use telephones or computer microphones and speakers to communicate. For videos, they can use cameras to record themselves and post the videos or participate in live video chats.

What should you consider when choosing an online deliberative tool?

■ Type of participant interaction

— Live or “asynchronous” interaction

		Type of media		
Type of participation interaction		<i>Text-based</i>	<i>Voice-based</i>	<i>Video-based</i>
	<i>Live</i>	Synchronous text editing	Phone call (teleconferencing)	Video conferencing
	<i>Asynchronous</i>	Email	Voice mail	Video mail
	<i>On demand</i>	Instant messaging (texting)	Instant voice messaging	Instant video messaging

*Adapted from Davies, T. and Chandler, R. Online Deliberation Design: Choices, Criteria, and Evidence. *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement*, Oxford University Press, Fall 2011 (chapter 6).



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Next, the type of participant interaction should be considered.

Some online tools allow for “live” interaction, where participants communicate in close to real time. This type of interaction is sometimes referred to as “synchronous communication.” An example of this interaction might be a live chat room.

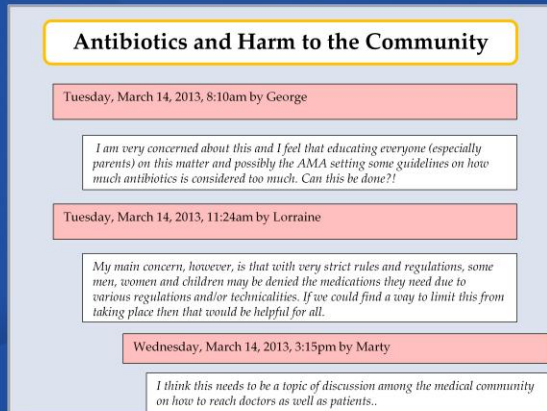
Other tools are set up for “asynchronous communication,” where participants post comments with no expectation of an immediate, real-time response, but with the idea of contributing to the conversation over a period of time. In this situation, participants do not have to be online at the same time. These types of tools include discussion boards or forums, where participants post and reply to comments on their own time.

Both kinds of tools—live and asynchronous—can be used in the types of media described in the last slide: text, voice, and video. For example, text-based tools, where participants communicate in written form, can be live in the case of a live chat room *or* asynchronous in the case of a discussion board. Video-based tools can be live, such as a live “video conference,” whereas in other cases, participants can record and post videos at different times in response to each other. This would be a form of asynchronous video communication.

What should you consider when choosing an online deliberative tool?

■ Structure of deliberation

— Free form vs. item-centered discussion



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Wednesday, March 14, 2013, 3:15pm by Marty

I think this needs to be a topic of discussion among the medical community on how to reach doctors as well as patients..

Comment: *This wording here about the new guideline is questionable.*



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Just as with in-person meetings, the form of online deliberation can vary according to its purpose. Some online discussions are more free-form. Others are more “item-centered;” that is, they focus on specific documents or questions posed to the group. The type of discussion often determines which tool is most appropriate for the deliberation.

For example, if you are looking to hold an open, free-form discussion, you might look for a tool that provides a chat room or discussion board where participants can develop and post their own ideas and topics and are free to respond to one another.

If you are looking for a more directed discussion where you need input on specific documents or questions, such as a proposed guideline within a community, you might look for a tool in which participants have access to the same document and can provide comments directly into the document. For example, you might post a set of draft guidelines on proposed immunization requirements, and allow participants to add their comments and highlight specific sections or lines in the document.



At this point, we would like to move to a description of the Deme Web Site. We used Deme to support the Community Forum Deliberative Methods Demonstration, an initiative funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). This demonstration was a randomized trial evaluating the effectiveness of public deliberation, comparing alternative approaches to public deliberation, and gathering public input on a topic central to the mission of the funding agency, specifically, public views on the use of evidence for making health care decisions.

The Community Forum team worked with the Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University to tailor Stanford's Deme platform for use in the Community Forum project. We highlight this tool both to demonstrate the ways an online tool can be used to support online and in-person deliberative methods, and because this free, open-access tool is available to those wishing to use or modify it to support their own projects.

The Deme Web Site: An online tool developed for AHRQ'S Community Forum Project

- The Deme Web site was used to:
 - Introduce the project and establish expectations
 - Host a welcome video
 - Provide pictures and names of facilitators*
 - Provide pictures and brief bios of clinical experts*
 - Provide pre-meeting reading materials
 - Provide a discussion board and polling tool*
 - Link to a post-session survey*

**features used in some but not all deliberative methods*



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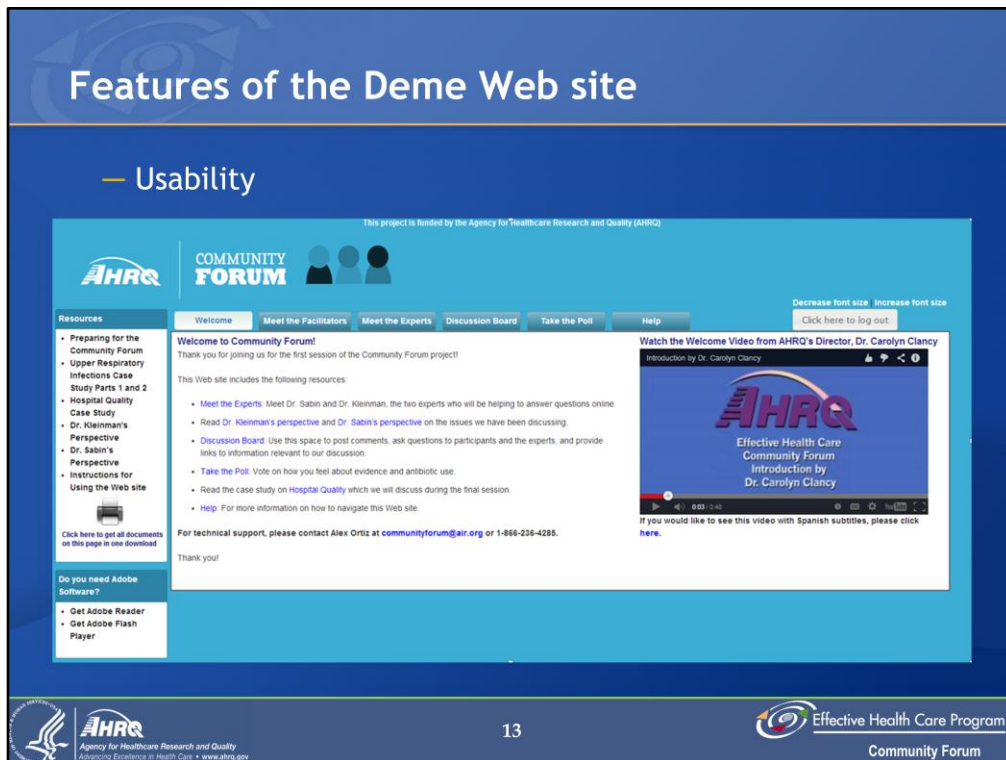


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The Deme Web site was used to:

- Introduce the project and describe what participants would be expected to do
- Host a welcome video
- Provide pictures and names of facilitators
- Provide pictures and brief bios of clinical experts
- Provide pre-meeting reading materials
- Provide a discussion board and polling tool
- Link to a post-session survey



We used cognitive testing to help design a web page that was user-friendly, including tabs for pages and a resource box for meeting materials and instructions for using the Web site.

Features of the Deme Web site

— Discussion board: Threaded discussions

The screenshot displays the AHRQ Community Forum interface. At the top, a banner reads "This project is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)". The forum title "COMMUNITY FORUM" is prominently displayed. A navigation bar includes links for "Welcome", "Meet the Facilitators", "Meet the Experts", "Discussion Board", "Take the Poll", and "Help". On the right, there are links to "Decrease font size" and "Increase font size", and a "Click here to log out" button.

The left sidebar contains a "Resources" section with links to "Preparing for the Community Forum", "Upper Respiratory Infections Case Study Parts 1 and 2", "Hospital Quality Case Study", "Dr. Kleinman's Perspective", and "Dr. Sabin's Perspective". Below this is a link to "Click here to get all documents on this page in one download". Further down, a section titled "Do you need Adobe Software?" lists "Get Adobe Reader" and "Get Adobe Flash Player".

The main content area is titled "Decisions to the problem" and includes a "Back to discussion board" link. It features a threaded discussion with the following posts:

- ruben550** (Sat Nov 10 2012 10:49 AM): "If we as society have located a detrimental flaw with Doctor's decision making, I truly believe it is up to our Government (us) to help come up with reasonable ideas to solve our day to day medical issues." [Reply]
- janet573** (Sat Nov 10 2012 06:52 PM): "I believe firmly that the government needs to be kept out of it. They are not the rule makers (Big boss in charge of everything) that some think they are. They are NOT looking out for our children's best interests or ours, they could care less. It's all about control and BIG money to them! The people, families, communities, doctors and the AHA should work out these issues together." [Reply]
- pollyam484** (Sat Nov 10 2012 11:15 AM): "I will say this again: This country needs a lot less government and a lot more personal responsibility. Our situation with our doctor is a prime example of where we are willing to allow someone else make decisions that may someday cause us personal harm. The idea sounds great, we don't shoulder the load, until these guidelines indicate something that will hurt us or our loved ones. Don't give up the safety of you and yours to lighten your load. NO ONE can be right all the time." [Reply]
- Dr. Sabin** (Sat Nov 10 2012 10:08 PM): "Hi Ruben, Janet and Pollyam - Thank you for these thoughts. You bring out issues that have divided the country. Ruben endorses government action. Janet voices powerful distrust in government. Pollyam emphasizes personal responsibility. As a point of interest, the AHA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs is working on an updating of the AHA Code of Ethics, and today we were working on a section that discussed patient responsibilities. Our system will work best if (i) physicians collaborate with each other in establishing standards and expectations based on the best evidence and (ii) patients take responsibility for promoting their own health and for being active partners in treatment planning." [Reply]

The footer of the page includes the AHRQ logo, the text "Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality Addressing Excellence in Health Care • www.ahrq.gov", the page number "14", and the "Effective Health Care Program Community Forum" logo.

When designing our discussion board, we considered threaded and unthreaded discussions, and decided to tailor the design for threaded discussions. A “threaded discussion” allows a participant to respond directly to another participant’s comment, and comments are formatted to show that they are in response to a previous comment. For example, they can be posted below the previous comment and indented. This is different from an “unthreaded discussion,” which is a running list of comments. A threaded discussion facilitates participant dialogue, which is considered more deliberative and closer to in-person discussion.

Features of the Deme Web site

— Polling tool: close-ended responses

This project is funded by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

The screenshot displays the AHRQ Community Forum website. The header includes the AHRQ logo and the text 'COMMUNITY FORUM'. Below the header, there is a navigation bar with links: 'Welcome', 'Meet the Facilitators', 'Meet the Experts', 'Discussion Board', 'Take the Poll', and 'Help'. A 'Click here to log out' link is also present. The main content area is titled 'Take the Poll' and contains the following text: 'Now that you've learned more about overusing antibiotics, please read over the three statements below. Click the "Agree" or "Disagree" button beneath each statement.' The three statements are: 1) 'I think it is up to the doctor and parents to decide if the antibiotic should be used in each individual case. Parents should not feel responsible for what might or might not happen in the future for the community as a whole.' 2) 'I think that given the risks to many people because of overuse of antibiotics, doctors and patients should consider the best interests of the community over individual interests and keep the use of antibiotics down.' 3) 'To avoid this problem, there should be stricter rules for when a doctor can order an antibiotic for a patient. We cannot always depend on people to do "the right thing" voluntarily.' Each statement has 'Agree' and 'Disagree' buttons. A 'Submit' button is located at the bottom right of the poll area. The left sidebar contains a 'Resources' section with links to various documents and a 'Do you need Adobe Software?' section with links to 'Get Adobe Reader' and 'Get Adobe Flash Player'.

Resources

- Preparing for the Community Forum
- Upper Respiratory Infections Case Study Part 1
- Upper Respiratory Infections Case Study Part 2
- Hospital Quality Case Study
- Dr. Kleinman's Perspective
- Ms. Mitchell's Perspective

Click here to get all documents on this page in one download

Do you need Adobe Software?

- Get Adobe Reader
- Get Adobe Flash Player

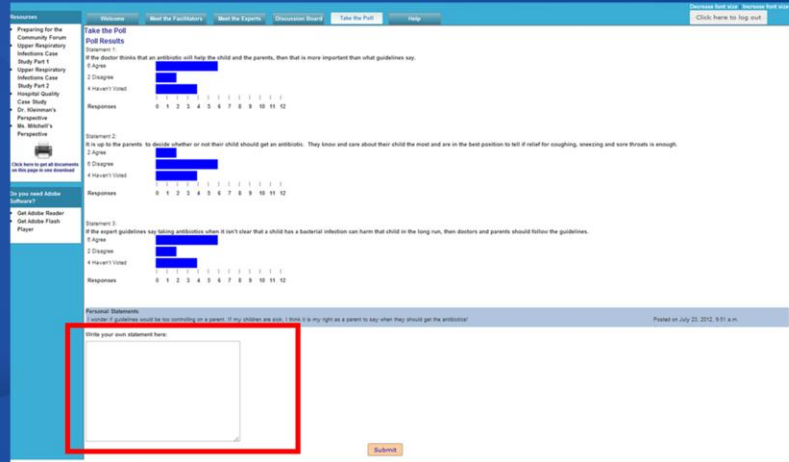
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Finally, the Deme platform offers a polling tool, which we tailored for our discussion questions and response options. We posted three statements and asked participants to “Agree” or “Disagree” with each statement.

Features of the Deme Web site

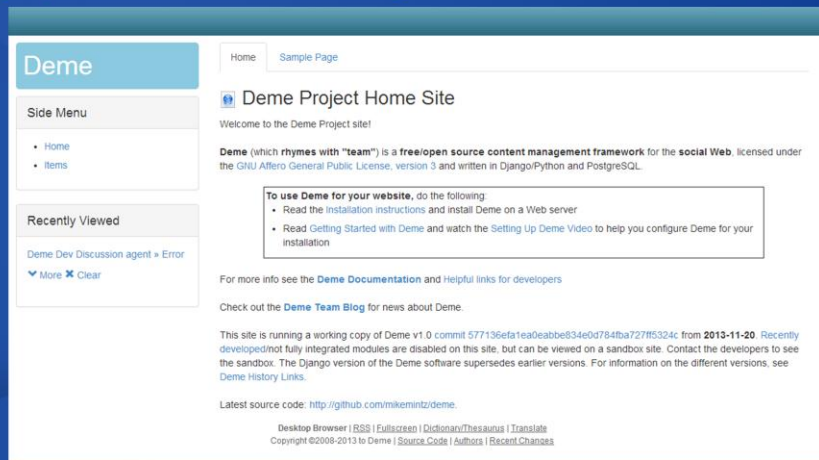
— Polling tool: open-ended responses



In addition to responding to these three statements, participants could write their own statements on the issue by submitting ideas through a comment box posted on the results page. This encouraged continued discussion and open-ended responses to polling questions.

Design your own Deme Web site

■ <http://deme.stanford.edu>



The Center for the Study of Language and Information at Stanford University is continuing work on the Deme platform with the goal of increasing usability for outside users to download and customize their own Deme Web sites. To help meet this goal, the Stanford team has developed instructions for installing Deme on a Web server, and for navigating and customizing the Deme Web site. Deme is free to use and tailor for your own group deliberations.

To access instructions for installing Deme, and both written and video descriptions of how to use Deme, please visit <http://deme.stanford.edu>.

Thank you.